



MI NETS



STATES



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**Michigan Network of Employers for Traffic Safety**

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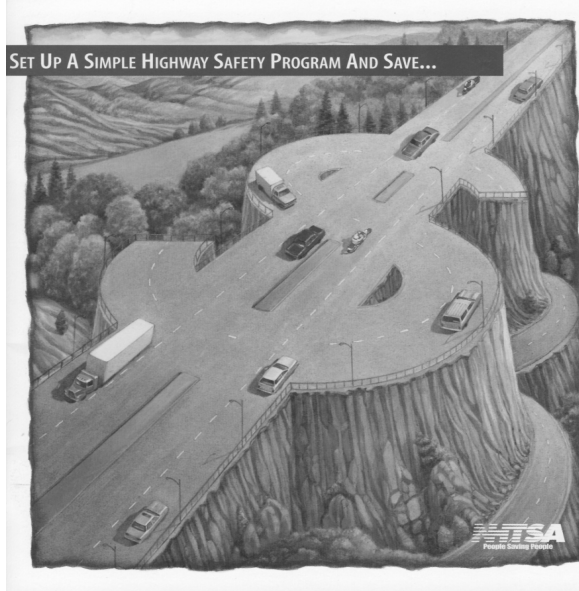
## **Traffic Safety Management Seminars a success**

A cross section of Michigan employers was represented at two traffic safety management seminars conducted in September in Lansing and Grand Rapids. The seminar focused on educating employers on the economic losses attributable to traffic crashes. The seminars stressed the importance of using safety belts, the dangers of drinking and driving, avoiding speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors including the drowsy and aggressive driver. "Thank you for providing me and our company the privilege of attending your seminar. I will be sharing the information you provided with our Corporate Safety Committee. I chair that Committee and the information I received will be most helpful in focusing on a neglected part of our overall program. Thank You for instilling in us the importance of traffic safety both at work and on the road.

## Companies and organizations who attended the latest Michigan NETS training:

Automobile Club of Michigan, AAA, Dearborn  
Board of Water & Light, Lansing  
Citizens Insurance Company, Howell  
City of Midland, Midland  
Detroit Edison, New Port  
Genesee County Road Commission, Flint  
Hartford Insurance, Grand Rapids  
Herman Miller, Inc., Zeeland  
Integrated Metal Technology, Spring Lake  
McPherson Hospital, Howell  
Melody Farms/Sexton Transportation, Lansing  
Newkirk Electric Company, Muskegon  
Powers Distributing, Inc., Sylvan Lake  
Quest Diagnostics, Auburn Hills  
Risk Management Authority, Livonia  
Traffic Safety Association of Michigan, Lansing  
Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Inc., Lansing  
Zelenka Nursery, Inc., Grand Haven

## A Simple Highway Safety Program in your workplace will reduce your company's risks



**M**otor vehicle crashes, whether they occur on- or off-the-job, are the primary cause of death and injury in the United States. Recent statistics show that an on-the-job crash with injuries will cost an employer more than \$24,000, and an off-the-job crash with injuries will cost the same employer more than \$18,000.

With reducing high costs like these, being every businesses' goal, starting a highway safety program is one of the simplest and most cost effective ways of reducing injuries and their related costs. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and

the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) developed a 15 page booklet, ***Set Up a Simple Highway Safety Program and Save.*** By instructing employees in basic traffic safety techniques including motor vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and motorcycle safety techniques and then rewarding safety conscious behavior, you can help your employees and their families avoid tragedy.

## Six Profitable Steps to Highway Safety

No matter what kind of highway safety program a company may have in mind, there are six simple steps that will lead to significant cost savings. Ideas, examples, and strategies are offered for each of these six steps.

1. Obtain management's commitment
2. Identify your costs
3. Develop an action plan
4. Implement highway safety policies
5. Implement an awareness campaign
6. Evaluate your program

### **How to Order**

For a complimentary copy of *Set Up a Simple Highway Safety Program and Save*, write to Dan Vartanian, Michigan NETS Coordinator, Office of Highway Safety Planning, 4000 Collins Road, PO Box 30633, Lansing, Michigan 48909-8133 or send a fax to Dan Vartanian at (517)333-5756.

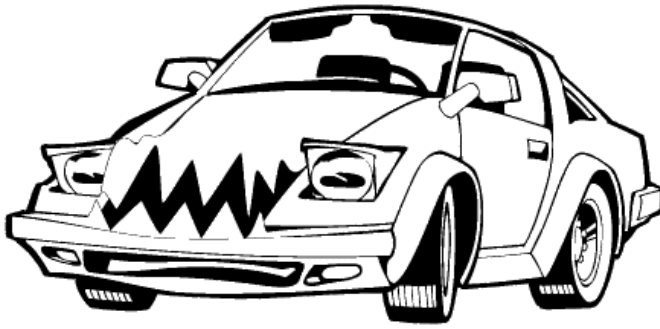
## **NETS Receives Hammer Award From Vice President Gore**

**S**ecretary of Transportation Rodney Slater presented national NETS with the Hammer Award on September 4, 1997 for extraordinary success as a public-private partnership. NETS is the first public-private partnership entity to receive the award. The Hammer Award is presented to teams of federal employees who have made significant contributions in support of reinventing government principles.



The award consists of a hammer, a ribbon, and a note from Vice President Gore, all in an aluminum frame. More than 900 Hammer Awards have been presented to teams comprised of federal employees, state and local employees, and citizens who are working to build a better government.

## **Are you concerned about Road Rage?** **You should be! 16 Percent of Michigan motorists diagnosed as aggressive/stressed drivers**



About one in six Michigan motorists-nearly a million drivers-may be in danger of "overheating" or driving "in the red," according to a recently released statewide survey to measure driver stress and aggression.

"We've heard a tremendous amount of anecdotal accounts regarding aggressive drivers," said Betty J. Mercer, OHSP division director. "We felt it was time to quantify the extent of the problem and determine what the greatest problem is in Michigan so we can begin to address it."

According to the survey, 56 percent of aggressive drivers are women, contrary to what many people believed. The survey also shows that aggressive drivers are more likely to be single, under 35, have less than a college education and fall into the middle income category.

The driver stress test, developed by John Larson, M.D., who heads the Institute for Stress Medicine in Norwalk, Conn., rates drivers in four categories: anger, impatience, competition and punishing. Many Michigan motorists, especially young women, scored especially high on the anger and impatience portions of the survey. Dr. Larson urges all motorists to consider several things when faced with stress or aggression.

Think more about making time spent driving good, instead of making good time.  
Driving is not a competition.  
Be polite and courteous, even if the other driver isn't.  
It's not your job to teach others how to drive.

Leave early to reach your destination on time. Don't lose your temper, rude gesturing and other kinds of hostile behavior are a waste of time and emotions, besides they could escalate into a hazardous situation, as depicted in the Dateline NBC special on Road Rage. Dateline NBC's coverage of road rage was well done and they can be reached through the Internet.

If you'd like to receive a copy of Dr. Larson's "Driver Stress Self Test," please contact Dan Vartanian at (517)333-5322 or Fax (517)333-7756 or write Dan at Michigan NETS, Office of Highway Safety Planning, 4000 Collins Rd., P.O. Box 30633, Lansing, MI 48909-8133.



## **Crashes are not accidents**

***by Betty J. Mercer, Division Director, Office of Highway Safety Planning***

**T**he word accident conjures up visions of an event that is unavoidable or beyond our control. "Sorry," we say, "it was an accident." But the same logic does not apply when the term is used to describe the majority of traffic crashes. For the most part, these events are avoidable and reasonably within a driver's ability to control and prevent.

What causes a crash? Drunk, impaired and drugged drivers in many cases. In other instances people are not paying attention, speeding, following too close, driving too fast for conditions or not using turn signals. When it comes down to it, someone usually is "at fault" and does something that triggers a chain of events ending in the sound of crashing metal, breaking glass and too often, cries of pain.

Changing how people think about events, and the words used to describe them, affects the way people behave. Motor vehicle crashes and injuries are predictable, preventable events. Continued use of the word accident promotes the concept that these events are outside of human influence or control.

Crashes exact a tremendous human economic toll, both nationally and in our state. Last year 1,505 people died on our roads and 142,558 more were injured. In fact, crashes are the leading cause of death for Michigan children, teens and young adults. We know that hundreds of people in our state could be saved each year if we could further reduce drunk driving and increase safety belt use. The death rate would plunge even further if more people refrained from speeding, tailgating and other potentially dangerous behaviors.

The way we drive does affect others.

The truth is that we are not powerless and many of these deaths and injuries could and should be prevented. The word accident has no business in the vocabulary of traffic safety. Many are heeding the call to refer to these events as crash, collision, incident and injury, terms that more accurately reflect the circumstances. This includes the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will no longer use the word accident in materials published and distributed by the agency.

We urge others to also use these terms to help focus on the true cause of crashes, and what each of us can do to prevent collisions and promote safer travel on our roads.



## **Star of Life Award**

**Michigan NETS Advisory Board Member Receives National Recognition**

Michigan NETS Advisory Board Member, Tom Gottschalk of American Medical Response, was honored earlier this summer in Washington, D.C. with 100 other top paramedics from throughout the country. The paramedic known to his co-workers as "Gus" received a "Star of Life" award from the American Ambulance Association as part of the organization's celebration of Emergency Medical Services Week.

"I was flattered to be nominated by my peers for this award," said Gottschalk. "I really, really like this work. I don't know too many people who have the kind of excitement about their work like I do.

"Tom is American Medical Response's safe driving coordinator, overseeing the company's driver training, retraining and evaluation programs. Gottschalk also conducts continuing education classes for area firefighters who must keep up their first aid training to meet state licensing standards as "first responders" at medical emergencies.



## **Check Your Calendar**

**Michigan Traffic Safety Summit-98**

The annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit has been scheduled to take place May 12-13, 1998 at the Kellogg Center, East Lansing, Michigan. The Third Annual Summit will attract a broad range of traffic safety professionals including engineers, emergency medical service providers, health professionals, educators, law enforcement and private sector personnel interested in learning about new and emerging traffic safety issues.



## **Are You a Responsible Party Host?**

**W**ith the holidays right around the corner, consideration must be given to corporate as well as personal liability with respect to hosting parties involving drinking when attendees will be driving themselves home.

Do you like to entertain? If so, as a host, you may be held responsible for guests who leave a party and drive drunk, particularly if that guest causes injury while in the driver's seat. During the first 9 months of 1997, Michigan lost 1,008 lives due to motor vehicle crashes and another 80,000 injuries as a result of these crashes. One of the major factors contributing heavily to highway deaths and injuries is the combination of drinking and driving. Of the lives lost in Michigan from January 1, 1997 through October 1, 1997, over 32% were alcohol/drug related. And much of that drinking and driving occurs after parties, receptions, and other social events.

In Michigan, liability can be extended to social hosts serving alcohol in the home or at a private office function. While no host wants to believe this could happen, it is apparent that conscious steps must be taken to see that alcohol is used responsibly at the parties we host. The following suggestions will help ensure the enjoyment, and the safety, of your entertaining:

- Keep foremost in your mind the comfort and safety of your guests. As couples or groups arrive, suggest that at least one person remain totally sober and serve as the "designated driver" for the drive home.
- Serve both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and be sure that your guests know that both kinds are available.
- Along with the drinks, serve food that is:
  - Fresh, visible, in adequate quantity, attractively arranged,
  - Unique and interesting to encourage consumption,
  - Distributed in waves to encourage frequent trips to the table or served by someone walking food around the room,
  - A protein-such as cheese, shrimp, pizza, spareribs-which inhibits the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream; avoid salty snacks and sweets which make people thirsty.
- Provide alternative activities to drinking. Seating should be conducive to talking and relaxing, with adequate space and lighting.
- Serve drinks only on request. Always have non-alcoholic beverages available for mixing as well as drinking.
- Mix the drinks yourself or hire a bartender. Adhere to strict serving guidelines:
  - Measure the correct amount of liquor in drinks, no doubles.
  - Refuse to serve individuals who appear to be intoxicated, impaired, or underage.
- Close the bar at least one hour before the event ends and have non-alcoholic beverages-tea, coffee, soft drinks-and dessert available at that time.

In some instances, despite all your best efforts, a guest will have had too much to drink and be unable to drive home safely. It is your responsibility as a host to step in at this time. Drive the guest home yourself or have someone else, who has not been drinking, do so. Invite the guest



to spend the night. Contact an alternative transportation program. In many areas local businesses have arranged with taxi companies to provide rides home for those who cannot drive safely with the businesses picking up the cost.

You should know that many employers have taken serious steps to combat drinking and driving, whether on company business or after a company-sponsored function. They have established policies prohibiting drinking on company time. Through information and education campaigns they are alerting employees to the dangers and costs of drunk driving, both to the employee and to the company. Employers recognize that, in this way, they can have a positive impact on one of the nation's major health hazards.

Driving requires a combination of thought and motor skills, a great deal of common sense, and a concern for the safety of everyone on the road. Safe driving demands an observant eye, a steady hand, and a clear head. There is no room for alcohol in the driver's seat. As a host you must be sure that the only drivers leaving your parties are sober.

## **Just a Reminder**

**P**lease visit the Michigan NETS website at:  
<http://www.trafficsafety.org/states/MI/default.htm>.

You can link to National NETS homepage through the above address when surfing the Web. Please also, visit the Office Of Highway Safety Planning's newly created home page at:  
<http://www.ohsp.msp.state.mi.us/>.

You will realize a wealth of resources involving traffic safety that are available to you for the asking. Let us know what you think after you've had the opportunity to visit these sites.

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

### **Car Phone Safety**

In the 5 seconds it takes to dial a phone number, you can travel:

- 206.5 feet and cross 2.6 lanes of traffic at 35 m.p.h.
- 403.5 feet and cross 4 lanes of traffic at 55 m.p.h.
- 476 feet and cross 4.7 lanes of traffic at 65 m.p.h.

(source: National Cellular SAFETALK center)

### **Car Phone Safety Tips**



Avoid using your cellular phone in school zones when children are present.  
Assess traffic conditions before placing a call.  
Place calls when your vehicle is stopped or have a passenger dial for you.  
Use your hands-free speaker whenever possible. Keep both hands on the wheel.  
Use speed or memory dial to minimize dialing time.  
Save intense conversations for when you're parked.

### **"Buying a Safer Car"**

Safety features, crash test, and buying tips are included in a newly revised publication sponsored by the American Automobile Association, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and Federal Trade Commission. Vehicles are rated for safety in frontal and side impacts, and for features such as air bags, safety belt systems, antilock brakes, and traction control systems for specific makes and models.

For a copy of "Buying a Safer Car," contact your local AAA office or call (202) 942-2079. For the crash test data; NHTSA's Auto Safety Hotline, (800) 424-9393, or [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) on the Internet.

### **New items at the Michigan Resource Center**

Call toll free 1-800-626-4636

- Motorcycle poster-full-color poster depicts a motorcyclist as a train and asks "Do you see me now?"
- Bystander care cards-steps to take when first on the scene of a traffic crash that could help save a life.
- EMS brochure-describes the services and functions provided by Emergency Medical Service providers.
- Video-Protecting your newborn-produced by NHTSA and covers correct use of child safety seats.
- Video-The "Science Guy" on air bag safety - TV's popular Bill Nye talks about air bags and why children need to sit in the back seat for safe travel.
- Video-Precious Cargo: Protecting the Children Who Ride With You (G.M.)-provides information on using the different types of child safety seats.

The best way to order materials from the Michigan Resource Center is to fax your order, including shipping address, to (517)882-7778, or call 1-800-626-4636.